

Autobiographical Introduction

I am an unlikely subject for biography. My life has been uneventful and inglorious and such adventures as have come my way have been no more than adventures of the mind. One of the temptations that a biographer must resist is the use of hindsight to give a spurious continuity to the life in question and thereby ignoring the part played by sheer chance. Parapsychology is such a deviant pursuit in our society that it is nevertheless proper to inquire how someone gets drawn into it. Perhaps the two most common explanations, in this connection, are the following. The individual in question may at some stage of his or her life have had intimations of the paranormal so impressive or disturbing that thereafter the topic became a consuming passion. Alternatively, and less dramatically, an interest in the paranormal may have been so strongly embedded in that person's family background and traditions that the seeds were sown from an early age.

Neither explanation, however, fits my particular case. Never at any time, alas, have I been favored with one of those inexplicable incidents which so many people I have met can recall from their past and which have played their part in the lives of so many of my fellow parapsychologists (Pilkington 1987). Indeed, I wonder sometimes whether I might not be specially deprived in this respect. Am I, perhaps, tone deaf to the promptings of my psyche? Has my right hemisphere—that half of the brain that is said to mediate our intuitions and our psychic functioning—become atrophied from neglect? I do not know, but I remain a stranger to such experiences. Still less can the answer be found in my family background. My family were all, without exception, stolidly impervious to what my friend, Stanley Krippner, has so aptly called the "song of the siren" (Krippner 1977). A much simpler, if less charitable, explanation in my case is my lack of success in any of the conventional pursuits. Deviants, after all, are generally misfits.

My Family Background

My parents were Russian Jews who settled in London shortly before the First World War. It was a time when Jews were leaving Russia in large numbers to escape discrimination and conscription into the Tsarist army. Most of them settled in the United States. As readers of the stories by Bashevis Singer will know, there was a rich vein of supernatural and mystical beliefs among the small Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. My parents, however, could be described as assimilated Jews. Their links with traditional Judaism were of a sentimental rather than pious nature. Indeed they prided themselves on their modern emancipated outlook—this was especially so with my mother, the more educated of the two. We children were given a mildly conventional Jewish upbringing but it never went very deep with any of us. I went through a typical phase of adolescent piety but before I was out of my teens I had lost completely my faith in a deity and nothing that has happened to me since has caused me to change my mind. Hence I was cut off thereafter from one traditional avenue to the supernatural, one that has meant a great deal to many of my friends and contemporaries.

It was our good fortune that my father prospered. He started an export business in the City of London trading in chemicals and sundry products with Eastern Europe and was in fact one of the first to do business with the newly established Soviet Union. We were thus brought up in comfortable circumstances in a large house near Hampstead Heath. I was born in 1920, the fourth of five children. We were a boisterous bunch and it was an invigorating nursery in which to grow up. Each of us, one could say, eventually made some mark on the world in our very different ways but, in the best Jewish tradition, we have remained a fairly closely knit family. My brother, Max (now Lord Beloff), is the eldest and I have three sisters whom I love dearly: Renée, Nora and Anne.

Max, ever since I can remember, was scholastically brilliant. He became an historian and later an authority on comparative government and international affairs. He attained the heights of British academic eminence when he gained his chair at All Souls, Oxford. Later he became president of Britain's only independent university at Buckingham, which he helped to found, and now, in his retirement, has become a Conservative life peer. As can be imagined, it was not easy to grow up in his shadow. My poor parents were fond of me in their own way and patient enough with my waywardness but there was no disguising their disappointment in me and they would teasingly call me their *schlemiel* or, more charitably, a "dreamer."

My eldest sister, Renée, after an abortive attempt at a career on the stage, settled for school teaching where she specialized in dramatic art. She married young and proved the most fruitful of the family by producing six children in fairly rapid succession. Unhappily her husband, a businessman, died while

they were still young and, as she never remarried, she had to bear the burden of bringing them up on her own. A woman of exceptional energy, she has never truly retired and now runs her own school in Milton Keynes in Bedfordshire.

Anne, the baby of the family, was our one real scientist. It was to be her fate to marry Ernst Chain whom she met at Oxford when he was busy with the research that was to win him the Nobel Prize for his part in the discovery of penicillin. But she was a good biochemist in her own right and, after Chain's death, she was promoted to a chair at Imperial College, London.

It was my middle sister, Nora, however, with whom I had my closest tie. This was partly due to the fact that she did not marry until very late in life but, more, to the fact that she was such good company. She served as foreign correspondent of the *Observer* newspaper in Paris, Moscow, Washington and elsewhere and won for herself an international reputation as a political journalist. Although a small person, she was surprisingly tough and combative and was often feared by politicians for her outspokenness. Since retiring from the *Observer* her main interest has been Eastern Europe. She published one book about her travels in the Soviet Union and another about the situation in Yugoslavia with a strong anti-Titoist slant. She has the proud distinction of having been expelled from both countries by the security police for spreading hostile propaganda.

Such, then, in brief, was my family but I can say that neither my parents nor my siblings nor their spouses shared my increasing interest in the paranormal and my brother, like most of his fellow Oxford academics, was openly dismissive.

My Career

It was obvious from an early age that I was not the bookish type. I am a very slow reader—an immense handicap for someone in academic life. On the other hand I have always taken a keen interest in art. My parents, therefore, decided that a career in architecture might be the answer for my future. It turned out to be a costly mistake. I never showed much skill even for drawing and painting, in which I liked to dabble, but I certainly lacked the concrete imagination, practical sense and grasp of detail that is so essential to the making of an architect. However, as I approached the age of leaving school, I still had the least idea as to what I wanted to do with my life and so had nothing to counter my parents' wishes. And so, in 1937, I enrolled at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in Bedford Square, London. My studies there did nothing to allay my own misgivings but, after two years, war broke out and I went into the army.

By the time my battalion was ready to be sent abroad Dunkirk had fallen

Later I fell ill and was invalided out of the army after two and a half years without ever having gone into action. It turned out that I had contracted Crohn's disease, a rare abdominal disorder whose etiology is, I gather, unknown but which can be cured by surgery as mine eventually was. I regard it as one of the many ironies of my life that the only time I have had a serious bout of illness in my adult life, which has been mercifully free from medical complications, it was, in all probability, my salvation since I learned later that my battalion had been sent to join the Allied campaign in Italy where casualties were very heavy. But my providential escape from the horrors of war exacted a price and left me with permanent feelings of inferiority towards those of my contemporaries who had a good war record to their credit.

I had managed to get through a good deal of reading while still in the army — there was always so much waiting around — including a fair amount of psychology. I had also picked up at a local library a copy of Rhine's *Extra-Sensory Perception*, which left a strong impression on me. When, therefore, I was fit enough to resume my education I wanted to make a clean break with architecture although I was still very vague as to my alternative. My mother pleaded with me to complete my architectural studies, warning me that, otherwise, I would become a drifter all my life (what today we would call a "dropout"). I was still too docile and too dependent to thwart my parents' wishes so I stuck it out and, by 1946, had completed my professional qualifications. There followed a number of menial jobs in architectural offices which, owing to my incompetence, I could never hold for very long and which are among the unhappiest memories of my life. Eventually I decided that there was nothing for it but to go back to square one and I enrolled as a student of psychology at London University, at first at evening classes at Birkbeck College and, later, full time at University College.

One of the attractions of University College at that time was the weekly philosophy seminar I could attend under the late A.J. Ayer. Although I never succumbed to his logical positivism that was then much in vogue, his acute and trenchant intellect made a lasting impression on me and to this day I always strive to model my own writing on his taut prose style. By the time I graduated from University College in 1952 I had reached the advanced age of 32 with no firm prospects as yet of being able to make a living. However, the very first thing I did on graduating was to marry a fellow student of psychology, Halla, who was ten years my junior. Her parents, like mine, were immigrants though of a more recent vintage. They were refugees from Hitler who had managed to get out of Germany only just in time before the war came.

Halla soon became the most important person in my life and we have stayed together ever since. She was the better psychologist of the two, social psychology was her area of expertise. She eventually became active in the affairs of the British Psychological Society and served as president one year. She is the author of *Camera Culture*, a study of the part which photography plays in our



Halla and John Beloff in 1953, a year after their marriage.

lives (H. Beloff 1985). Our marriage produced two children, a girl in 1958 and then, five years later, a boy. Both have chosen their own path in life which they are now busily pursuing. My son, Bruno, is a computer scientist who already earns more than I ever did and whose facility with machines and grasp of technology is something that I can only envy. My daughter, Zoe, is striving toward a career as a filmmaker in New York and is endowed with the artistic abilities which the gods denied to me. Although our marriage was, in many respects, a marriage of minds — we are both devotees of the arts — I think I can truthfully say that neither my wife nor our children nor any of my many nephews and nieces were ever troubled by my "relentless question."

Straight after graduating we both went to work for Raymond Cattell at the University of Illinois. His main claim to fame was to have devised what is still one of the most widely used tests of personality. It was an exciting new experience for us as well as being our introduction to the American way of life. But, after a year, we had had enough and we returned to Britain where I had been offered a job in the Department of Psychology of Queen's University, Belfast, under George Seth. Neither of us had ever set foot in Ireland before but we found Belfast a pleasant enough place in which to make our home. The 1950s were the halcyon days before the advent of terrorism and, when t

troubles did eventually erupt, in 1969, we had long since moved on to Edinburgh. In those more carefree days one could still get a job as a lecturer without having a Ph.D. I was able to work for it while doing my teaching and so, by 1956, I had managed to obtain my doctorate from Queen's University, as did Halla at the same time. Visual perception was the area of psychology that then interested me. It had grown naturally out of my interest in the visual arts which had led me into the byways of experimental esthetics and psychophysics, but I never had the patience one needs to become a first rate experimentalist.

By this time I was well acquainted with the literature of psychical research and I made a point of trying to find out all I could about one very famous episode that had taken place in Belfast during the First World War. It involved Dr. W.J. Crawford, a lecturer in mechanical engineering, and the young physical medium, Kathleen Goligher (Barham 1988). But I still never thought that I might take an active role in experimental parapsychology unless I were to be lucky enough to encounter a gifted subject. My initiation eventually came about as the result of a talk I gave to the student physics society at Queen's. A bright young physics student, Leonard Evans, persuaded me that it might be possible to demonstrate PK using the emission of particles from a radioactive source. I liked the idea and was taken with his youthful enthusiasm and we devised an experiment using equipment made available to us in the Department of Chemistry with volunteers drawn from the local spiritualist society. Alas, we obtained only null results (Beloff & Evans 1961)—a presage of things to come—but we somehow had contrived to anticipate a new development in PK research that was soon to reach fruition, thanks to the genius of Helmut Schmidt, with the result that our paper has been cited more often than any other experimental paper that I have published.

A crucial step in my career was the publication of my first book, *The Existence of Mind* (1962). It was a contribution to the philosophy of mind, rather than to psychology as such, and it represented my outraged reaction to Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* (1949). Ryle's book had become enormously popular and influential but my purpose was to show that it was utterly misguided. Ryle propounds the doctrine known as "analytical behaviorism," that is to say the view that all mental concepts, without exception, can be explicated without residue in terms either of overt behavior or of the disposition to behave in a particular way. My book attempted to show that mind was, on the contrary, a cause of behavior and the subject of conscious experience. More passionate, perhaps, than profound, it had little effect on the subsequent course of British philosophy but I drew some comfort from the fact that it caught the attention of some eminent thinkers who, for one reason or another, were themselves at loggerheads with the philosophical establishment, including Michael Polanyi, Karl Popper, John Eccles and Arthur Koestler. I was also very gratified to get a fairly favorable review in *The New Statesman*, by "Freddie" Ayer (as he was known).



At FRNM, summer 1965; left to right: Cynthia Weaver, Wayne Whitfield, Betty Newton, J.B. Rhine, Fay David (back with glasses), B. Kanthamani (woman, front), John Freeman (back with glasses), John Beloff (front), Rex Stanford (glasses, rear center), Martin Johnson (bow tie), Harold Avery (glasses), Louisa Rhine (front, holding glasses), Charles Honorton (back), Dorothy Pope (middle, with glasses), Lynne Guyor, James Carpenter, Marie Avery (striped dress), David Rogers, Reid Creech.

More important, however, for the direction my career was later to assume, was J.B. Rhine's somehow getting wind of my book, the final chapter of which is devoted to "the paranormal," and inviting me to visit his laboratory in Durham, North Carolina. This I gladly did in the summer of 1965. I had argued in my book that parapsychology alone provides the empirical evidence needed to vindicate the autonomy and efficacy of mind, a view that I have adhered to ever since. Gaither Pratt, then Rhine's right hand man (Pratt 1987) also befriended me and it was he who invited me to give the banquet address when the Parapsychological Association met in Oxford, in 1964, for their annual convention. (Beloff 1964). I was further patronized by that other dominant figure of the parapsychology establishment, Eileen Garrett, and was in due course rewarded with invitations to her fabulous conferences at Le Pio, near St. Paul de Vence in the south of France. I remained persona grata with the Parapsychology Foundation after she died when her daughter, Eileen Coly, became president.

The Relentless Question

Rhine showed, I think, some perspicacity in urging me to continue writing about parapsychology rather than practicing it. I was already acquiring the reputation, which has clung to me ever since, of being a negative or psi-inhibitory experimenter and Rhine, of course, had no use for anyone who could not deliver positive results.* I did not heed his advice because I did not wish to become a mere commentator from the sidelines nor was I a sufficient scholar ever to become one of the historians of the field. Nevertheless, I would have to agree that experimentation was never my strong suit whereas I do believe that I have an ability to write, an ability that has stood me in good stead ever since my schooldays.

In 1962 James Drever II offered me a job† in the Department of Psychology of the University of Edinburgh although he made no secret of the fact that he was an avowed skeptic with regard to parapsychology. We moved there in the winter of 1963 and Edinburgh has been my home ever since. At Edinburgh I was required to teach psychology on a broad front but no objection was ever raised, either by my superiors or by my colleagues, to my making parapsychology my primary research area, a fact which, I think, speaks well for British tolerance. Moreover, Drever's successor, the late David Vowles, though himself a neuropsychologist, took a benign attitude towards the paranormal. I was lucky in obtaining some private funding that enabled me to hire a research assistant.

Our first systematic research program was an attempt to replicate the work of Milan Ryzl of Prague who was then claiming to be able to train ESP using hypnosis. What gave substance to these claims was the presence of his star subject, Pavel Stepanek, who, after having undergone this training, was scoring consistently in a nonrandom way on a test of clairvoyance to the satisfaction of parapsychologists from several different countries who went to Prague for the sake of testing him. Stepanek, I may say, performed in the waking state, not under hypnosis. In 1964, with help from the British Council, I went to Prague myself to test Stepanek and make contact with Ryzl. Although the results I obtained with Stepanek were disappointing (Ryzl and Beloff 1965), I was favorably impressed with Ryzl himself and we duly went ahead with our program at Edinburgh. It eventually became clear, however, that, for whatever reason, we were getting no learning effect (Beloff & Mandleberg 1966). A few years later Ryzl defected from Czechoslovakia and went to live in the United States, at first to work for J.B. Rhine, then later settling in California. He has never subsequently furnished convincing proof that he has found a method of

*In the end, it proved to be his undoing. He could not desist from heaping favors on the young W.J. Levy who produced positive results, time and again—until he was caught cheating (Rhine 1974).

†Even better, he offered both Halla and me jobs. He was powerful enough to ignore the anomaly of a husband and wife in the same department.

training ESP which remains one of the supreme unfulfilled goals of the parapsychologist. Later we tried other training techniques such as the "waiting" technique, as described by Rhea White (1964) but with no better success (Beloff & Mandleberg 1967).

At Edinburgh I made the acquaintance of John Smythies, then of the Department of Psychiatry, now at the University of Alabama. Smythies already had a long-standing interest in parapsychology and we even collaborated on an experiment he wanted to try using his brain-damaged patients (Smythies & Beloff 1965) but we had no luck here either. Smythies had been commissioned to edit two books for Routledge, *Brain and Mind* (1965) and *Science and ESP* (1967), and I was invited to contribute to both volumes. It was, once again, Smythies who proposed me for the Council of the Society for Psychical Research, to which I was elected in 1964 and to which I have been reelected continuously ever since. Much later, after Smythies had migrated to the United States, he invited me to coedit with him a volume of solicited articles defending the dualist position on the mind-body problem, a position to which both of us in our different ways adhered. By then, however, times were harder for the publishing trade and Routledge turned us down. Eventually, however, the University Press of Virginia came to our rescue (thanks to the good office of Ian Stevenson) and our book, *The Case for Dualism*, has now at last appeared.

Our first doctoral student to do a dissertation in parapsychology was Adrian Parker, who had graduated from our Department but had then done a clinical training at the Tavistock Institute in London. The title of his dissertation was "The Experimenter Effect in Parapsychology" (Parker 1977). While engaged on it he also managed to write a book dealing with ESP in altered states of consciousness (Parker 1970), to which I wrote an introduction. Following Parker we had a succession of graduate students keen to work in parapsychology. Some of them, such as Richard Broughton, Brian Millar and Michael Thalbourne have become well known to the parapsychology community. Thalbourne, too, managed to produce a book while working for his Ph.D. (Thalbourne 1981), a very useful little glossary of parapsychological terms (Thalbourne 1982). More recently Julie Milton and Deborah Delaney obtained their doctorates from this department on aspects of the ganzfeld technique and they are now employed as research associates by our new "Koestler Professor of Parapsychology," Robert Morris. I have always felt that I owed a special debt to my graduate students on whom I came increasingly to depend for the experimental output of our parapsychology unit and it is them that I dedicate this book.

My second book, *Psychological Sciences* (1973), was, essentially, a distillation of my lecture courses but, again, I included a chapter on parapsychology. The title of the book was to convey the message that psychology never was and never could be a single unified science but at most a conglomerate of more

less related sciences. Not that the idea was new, indeed my old antagonist, Gilbert Ryle, had already said as much in his *The Concept of Mind* but perhaps not so many psychologists had made the point so explicitly. At all events, I took the view that parapsychology had the same right to be considered a "psychological science" as any other even if it seldom figured in the curriculum at the university or in the standard psychology textbooks. I was also at this time commissioned by Elek Science, a London publisher, to edit a volume of solicited papers in parapsychology, which duly appeared in 1974 under the title *New Directions in Parapsychology*. Arthur Koestler did me a great favor on that occasion by contributing an "Afterword" to the volume for which he demanded no payment. Quite recently this book has resurfaced in a Japanese edition.

Such honors as have come my way in the course of my career I owe entirely to my fellow members of the small but worldwide parapsychological community. I was once even awarded a money prize by a Swiss Society thanks to the recommendation of the late Anita Gregory. I was elected president of the S.P.R. for the period 1974-1976 and I have twice served as president of the Parapsychological Association, in 1972 and again in 1982. It was in 1972 that the P.A. met in Edinburgh for their annual convention. In 1982 it met in Cambridge to join forces with the S.P.R. to celebrate the centennial of the latter and the jubilee of the former. My presidential address for the Edinburgh convention is included in this volume (see "Belief and Doubt") but my presidential address for the Cambridge meeting ("Three Open Questions") has been omitted as the themes I touch upon there are dealt with more fully elsewhere. In Edinburgh it was Arthur Koestler who gave the banquet address while in Cambridge it was Hans Eysenck. Although these two intellectual titans disagreed on most issues, both were good friends of parapsychology.*

One particular honor conferred upon me descended from on high like a bolt from the blue. In March 1983 I received a telephone call from Koestler's solicitors informing me that I had been nominated in Koestler's will as one of four executors (the others being his solicitor, his publisher and his literary agent). The double suicide of Arthur and Cynthia Koestler that had just taken place had attracted wide publicity throughout the world. As myself a keen supporter of the cause of voluntary euthanasia, I admired Arthur's courage and rationality in deciding to choose the manner and moment of his death rather than waiting passively for the fatal diseases that were ravaging him to take their toll. But it was, of course, tragic that Cynthia, who was herself in good health, should have decided to die with him rather than go on living without him. Even after reading their joint posthumous autobiography (Koestler & Koestler

*Both have shown goodwill towards me. Eysenck wrote a favorable review of my *Psychological Sciences* and Koestler cited it in the *Observer*, that Christmas, as among his choice of books of the year.

1984), it is still hard for me to understand how any woman could love a man to that extent but I may be unduly cynical. Anyway, as far as parapsychology is concerned, the consequences were wholly favorable since Koestler had bequeathed his entire estate for the establishment of a chair of parapsychology at a British university. As the only one of the executors with any knowledge of parapsychology, it thus devolved on me to find a British university that would accept his gift, which many might regard as something of a Trojan horse.

The experience brought home to me the distrust and suspicion that still surrounds the mere mention of parapsychology in academic circles. In the event, the one university that, from the outset, was fully supportive was my own at Edinburgh. This was due very largely to the then principal, John Burnett, and the then dean of social sciences, an architect, Barry Wilson. Perhaps my example in keeping a low profile all those years had paid off by convincing my colleagues that parapsychology could not be so scandalous as some averred. Anyway, I was delighted when the Koestler bequest was finally awarded to Edinburgh. It had saddened me to think, as I was reaching retirement age, that parapsychology would soon disappear from the Edinburgh scene had it not been for this turn of events. Fortunately I was allowed a place on the selection committee and could thus use my influence in the choice of a candidate to become the first Koestler professor and I was delighted when the appointment was conferred on Robert Morris, a youthful American who had won universal respect in his country from both parapsychologists and the critics.

The fact that I take seriously phenomena that have clearly failed to impress most of my contemporaries forces me to ask whether, in all honesty, I have some special *need* to believe? By the laws of cognitive dissonance the longer you commit yourself to some cause and the more effort you devote to it the harder it becomes to renounce it. My friend, Susan Blackmore, is one of those rare individuals who succeeded in swapping horses in midstream. Following a prolonged bout of failure to elicit psi she threw her lot in with the skeptical community (Blackmore 1986). But she was still in the early stages of her career while I am a veteran. Could it be that I no longer dared yield to doubt? There have been times when I have been assailed with the thought that, perhaps, the whole field had been misconceived from the start and was now running into the ground. The Levy scandal (Rhine 1974) was a bitter pill and even more traumatic for me was the final dismemberment of S.G. So (Markwick 1978). Another unsettling episode was when I thought I had discovered a remarkable medium on the Isle of Wight. But she turned out to be fraudulent and it was largely thanks to the help I received from friends, including my sister Nora, that I realized this just in time to prevent my making a fool of myself in print (Stevenson & Beloff 1980). However, I survived the various shocks and setbacks as did my basic conviction that psi is real.



John Beloff, September 1985 (photo by Sean Hudson).

Whatever the psychodynamics of my own personality, I cannot be accused of ignoring the skeptical literature. On the contrary I am always anxious to read what the critics have to say. I subscribe to the *Skeptical Inquirer* and to the *Zetetic Scholar*. I attended a CSICOP conference, the year it met in London, and I have engaged in lengthy correspondence with the amazing James Randi and the eminent Martin Gardner. I have come to realize that my own ignorance of conjuring techniques may have misled me in assessing the veridicality of some of the cases of strong phenomena. But, when all that is granted, my impression is still that the skeptics are, for the most part, too facile and too complacent. They dwell too often on the weaker cases while ignoring or glossing over the really awkward evidence. For example, they are far too ready to assume that, if a medium or psychic has been caught cheating, this disposes of their claim, as if it was their character that was at issue rather than the phenomena. Whereas, if K.J. Batcheldor is to be believed, there may be something inherent in the psychodynamics of producing strong phenomena that predisposes one to cheat. All one can say for certain is that, whatever the

answer may be, it is by no means simple or straightforward. In our common desire to unravel the truth, I find the skeptics much less ready to see things from our point of view than we are from theirs.

I retired in October 1985. Never having occupied a chair, I could not then become "emeritus" but thanks to the good offices of our new head of department, Robert Grieve, I have been made an "honorary fellow" of the department and am allowed to retain a room there and use the university facilities. Hence, though I no longer teach, I am not cut off from my natural community of scholars. I still keep a fatherly eye on what goes on in the department and help, where required, with the supervision of graduate students. I am still editor of the *Journal of the S.P.R.* but, more than anything else, I have an urge to write. Always conscious of the inordinately long time it took me to find my feet in life, I am anxious to have my say before it is too late. Meanwhile I also like to keep up with my large international correspondence.

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Such, then, has been my life, at least as I perceive it. What now follows are my thoughts about the topic that has occupied me for so long. They offer no revelations and no bold new theories of psi but I am hopeful that they may strike a chord with readers who share my curiosity and my puzzlement. I would describe myself as, basically, a conservative thinker. I mean by this not that I regard commonsense as sacrosanct but that I demand very good reasons before relinquishing a commonsense position. My main aim in these papers has been to do justice to the evidence while, at the same time, seeking to do the least violence to our reason and our general knowledge.

In this brief introduction it has not been possible to mention the names of all who have helped me or have influenced my outlook. Suffice it to say that they are not forgotten and that they have my sincere gratitude.